
ARENA REPORT

Volume 1, Number 9

18
WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION
Saturday, December 31, 1988
Hartford Civic Center
Hartford, CT

Happy New Year everyone and welcome to the ninth issue of Arena Report. It seems like ages ago that I did the last issue when it was only four weeks ago. I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays and I'd like to thank everyone for the nice cards and letters I received. This issue will be busting at the seams. We got the report from Hartford of course, as well as a brief rundown of "Starrcade", correspondent reports, and some letters to the editor. And let's not forget my favorite section to do, the one where I get to spout off at the mouth, that being the "Ramblings" column. Although I barely made my twice a month commitment this month I can't say the same for January as the only show in the area is 1/28 in Springfield. We'll be back to normal in February though as a week later I'll be publishing my first "Arena Report" N.W.A. edition from Philly 2/4 where a bunch of people will be converging for a weekend of fun.

As I mentioned earlier, "Arena Report" comes out usually twice a month unless the area is dry for a show. (which generally doesn't happen) The cost is a mere 50¢ an issue and you may order up to as many as you like. (That never comes out right.) The reports run from 4-8 pages but the more it grows you can look for 5-10. Big difference, huh? The report contains everything mentioned in the first paragraph except we won't have a brief rundown on "Starrcade" every issue. Ha Ha! There should be a number in the top left hand corner of this first page letting you know how many issues you have remaining on your subscription.

All renewals, match results, and letters may be sent to Ron Lemieux, 205 Vernon Ave. #187, Vernon, CT 06066. We'll have a grading by committee this afternoon as the show was attended by the "Four Herdsmen" (and if anyone thinks they're funny and substitutes an "N" for the "H" I'll sick Pat Patterson on you) Louie Fortuna from Stoughton, MA, Dan Reilly from Enfield, CT and the infamous Ted "Koko" Brutomesso from Berlin, CT. (I just had a great idea for a new gimmick. Have Patterson, Bravo, Frenchy Martin, and Ray Stevans be known as the "Herdsmen". Something to do with sheep. Boy that was baaaaahd.) Let's go to the insurance capital for the first match.

Opening Match

Terry Taylor beat the Blue Blazer with the hotshot in 11:36. What a surprise, especially since Taylor turns "face" on next weeks SNME. Blazer had no entrance music, he also didn't do his backflip off the top rope entrance. Safe to say he's being buried. Expect him to be N.W.A. bound soon. Just as well. It was a decent match. RL ** $\frac{1}{2}$ (I'll stick with star grades and the other three "experts" will give a composite letter grade.) Committee- B-

2nd Match

Rick Rude defeated Hillbilly Jim with the Rude Awakening in 3:01. Rude did some good mic work at the beginning giving the hick from Mud Lick a hard time. Why do they keep Jim around? I guess just for his wonderful (?) voice to grace the next album. RL * Committee-D

Tag Team Match

The Bushwhackers upended The Bolsheviks in 9:19. The Sheeps are as Ted commented, totally out of their element here. They are brawlers and bleeders and need to work with high flying teams to have good matches. Match was more comedy than anything else. They seem to have replaced George Steele more than the Bulldogs. Match broke down after Butch Miller got the hot tag (more like luke warm) and ended as the Whackers (Mean Gene must have come up with this nickname) lifted Boris for the dreaded double knee to the stomach. RL * Committee-D*

4th Match

Greg Valentine pinned Ronnie Garvin in 7:34. Must be punishment for attending Super Clash. Match was okay with Garvin delivering the loudest chops I've ever heard. End saw the "Man With The Hands of Clay" (they must have turned since they don't call them stone anymore) take the shin guard off of Greg but as ref Hebner tried to take it away from him, Valentine came from behind for the roll up. RL-* $\frac{1}{2}$ Committee-B-

Flag Match

Hacksaw Duggan beat Dino Bravo in 9:39. Who cares. Definate worst feud of the year candidate. Frenchy accidently hit Bravo with the flag allowing the Hacksaw man to make the pin. RL Dud Committee-D-

WWF Tag Team Title-Return Match

Powers of Pain beat Demolition on a count out. Match went 7:21. There was a no dq. rule here so they have a count out. Good clear cut decision. Fans finally realize who the heels are. It only took Fuji and the Powers beating up a jobber in every arena around the country before their title match to convince the braintrust of the fans. Match was their typical boots to the face and good clotheslines. RL ** Committee-C

7th Match

Curt Hennig beat Koko Ware in 9:27. Curt used the fisherman suplex in what was the best match of the night. Lots of flying around and rope action which made this match real good. When Koko went for a splash, Curt lifted his knees to set up the finisher. RL *** Committee-B

W.W.F. Heavyweight Championship

Randy Savage retained his title pinning Bad News Brown in 9:06. Finally a decent match from the Macho Man. His last three bouts I've seen him in were lackluster affairs. Savage even did a dive through the ropes onto Brown. As Brown went for a bodyslam Randy held on to roll the previously "unbeaten" Bad News up for the victory. RL ** $\frac{1}{2}$ Committee-B-

Hartford Notes

Attendance was 6,700 which is good considering it was New Years

Eve day...They switch over to the New Haven Coliseum 2/13 with: Hogan-Bossman, Rougeaus-Bushwhackers, Haku-Martel, and Valentine-Neidhart announced. Bad line-up but Hulk will bring in around 5,000. That match by the way is a return... Terry Garvin (you know, the guy who runs the school for self defense with students like Steve Lombardi, etc.) and Arnold Skaaland were the agents today.

Starcade Review

1. Steve Williams and Kevin Sullivan downed The Fantastics in 15:50 to capture the U.S. Tag belts. Unlike most people, I didn't think this match was so great. Since coming to the NWA Williams isn't the same. He wasn't selling enough for the Fantastics, yet he got hi butt kicked for Stallion during the Clash of Champions. You figure it. Doctor Death gave Bobby Fulton a hot shot to win the titles. RL * $\frac{3}{4}$ DR B (I watched the show at Dan's house, thus his letter grades.)
2. Midnite Express over Original Midnites when Cornettes team hit Randy Rose with the double goosle in 17:26. Post match stuff made this one. I really think this match showed the average workers that Rose and Condrey are. They take bumps just fine but when they are working on rest holds, they seem lost. End came after Paul E. used the phone but left it in the ring. RL *** DR B
3. Russian Assassins beat Ivan Koloff & Junkyard Dog in 6:47. This match was basically a squash by Uncle Ivan and Nephew Junkyard until the end where Paul Jones loaded Angel's mask and he hit Ivan to set up the pin. So unfortunatly we still have Jones to kick around. I wish they'd take the mask off Victory and let him win openers. The guy is a talent and this Russian thing in the NWA is just as old as The Bolsheviks. RL * DR D
4. Rick Steiner beat Mike Rotunda for the T.V. Title in 17:59. Match was fun. Williams came out at sixteen minutes to prematurely ring the bell. Other ref came in to order it restarted and while Sullivan argued with him Rotunda collided with him setting up the winning pin. RL ** $\frac{3}{4}$ DR-B+
5. Barry Windham retained the U.S. Title by beating Bam Bam Bigelow via count out in 16:17. I still haven't figured out why Bigelow got off Barry at the two count. Dan thought Dillon paid him off. Sorry Charlie, no happen! Windham is one of the best, Bigelow, I'm still skeptical. RL ** $\frac{1}{2}$ DR-B-
6. Dusty Rhodes & Sting beat The Road Warriors by disqualification in 11:20. Up until this point I was sitting back enjoying the show but when Sting did that leap from the top rope I was on the edge of my seat the rest of the card. What a talent! I loved this match. I even didn't mind Dusty. End saw Ellering interfere for the dq. but so what, it was a fun match to watch. RL *** $\frac{1}{4}$ DR-B
7. Ric Flair pinned Lex Luger to retain the NWA World Title in 30:59. What can you say. This match was superb. I've never been a great admirer of Flair's matches due to the same repitoire but this was solid stuff. I would have given this four and $\frac{1}{2}$ stars but the finish bothered me. Why couldn't Luger take the clean pin. That was the way it was supposed to end but Lex convinced Ric to put his foot on the rope for leverage. This match told a story, right Dan! RL **** DR-A-

Notes

I thought the lighting was great but thank god they got rid of the obnoxious camera switches... Jim Ross and Bob Caudle were great but Ross seems like he's trying to be too much of a comedian. Don't get me wrong, I love the guy, but I think he went a little overboard.. I got a live report from Mike Basnight of Ahsokie, N.C. who reported

that Junkyard Dog won the Bunkhouse Stampede in an abysmal 10 minutes. Half the wrestlers were laughing and not many were taking things seriously since they were off the air. Dog eliminated Abby with the help of a bamboo stick to win \$50,000. Yeah right!... They kept hyping their next P.P.V. event on 2/20, yours trulys B-Day. Too bad they have no line-up yet. They better get it in gear.

Ramblings

Randy Savage is booked against both heels and faces in the upcoming months so look for the final breakup with Hogan on the N.B.C. Main Event Special which comes from Milwaukee 2/3. One notable foe for Savage is Ultimate Warrior. What classic matches those should be. Let's see how good Randy really is.... Starting 2/14, TBS will have at least one main match on their Sat. night show. It looks like there will be lots of changes now that Jim Herd is in. Unfortunately, if they keep taking Vince's rejects like JFD and Butch Reed, they'll be going backwards. I heard they're negotiating with Don Muraco now. Just kidding but now watch them sign him... Has anyone noticed Lord Al Hayes subtle heel turn on the Madison and Boston shows. He's constantly on Sam Houston and other faces case. I hear they're going to book him against Superstar Graham at Wrestlemania and Rod Trongard gets to book the match. Rod reportedly wants a steel cage match with the loser banned from announcing and the winner has to climb out the cage. I hear he is going to put Graham over so there is a chance he'll lose both as who thinks Billy can make it out of the cage without crippling himself. Smart guy that Rod. He'll do us all a favor. Wade Keller was my source for that last story. Oh, oh, Wade just called and said his informant was wrong and he says it'll never happen again.... It was sad to see Tim Horner do a job on Superstars for DiBiase. He had a brief flurry but no more than a Lanny Poffo gets on that show. By the way, his match with Curt Hennig from Boston last month was enjoyable.... Frank Dusek talked smart the other week on World Class when he said, "That Samu took a good bump in the corner.".... Arena reporter Ken Utley tells me that both the NWA & WWF are running in Dallas this month. Turner is at the State Fair Coliseum on the 15th and Vince runs a week later at the Convention Center. What morons. They don't run all of '88 and now they go in to try within a week of each other. Of course, World Class will probably move their free Sat. morning t.v. tapings to Sunday night for those two weeks. That takes care of Vince and Turner's shows. It was about four years ago that Vince ran Dallas with Piper-Hogan on top and drew 182.... Terry Taylor is booked with Boris Zuchov after his turn. He'll wrestle one of Heenan's men at Wrestlemania.

Correspondent Reports

Omaha Civic Auditorium

Omaha, NE

December 3, 1988

Correspondent: Bruce Grummert (WWF Lover)

- 1) Sam Houston pinned Nikolai Volkoff with a reverse cradle in 8:04.
- 2) Steve Lombardi upset (?) Scott Casey with a clothesline in 9:28. No heat even though Steve tried to make some. They should have opened the roof. Sorry, I forgot it's cold in Nebraska in the winter.
- 3) Paul Roma small packaged Danny Davis in 12:00. 4) Rick Rude beat Hillbilly Jim in 2:41. After, they did a rude awakening but the girl who was sitting behind Bruce said their lips never touched.
- 5) Andre the Giant beat Jake Roberts via dq. when Jake threw the snake in the ring. Bout went 14:00 and place went nuts for Roberts.

6) Brain Busters beat The Rockers in 18:24 when Tully gave Sean Michaels the slingshot suplex. Best match of the night with good action. 7) Bad News Brown beat Omar Atlas in 38 seconds. No wonder this guy was undefeated for so long. 8) Ultimate Warrior pinned Honkeytonk Man when he threw Jimmy Hart on top of HTM and then went for the pin in 5:09... Attendance was 5,384 and Bruce says it was the worst WWF card he's seen in along time.

Philadelphia Civic Center Philadelphia, PA December 10, 1988
Correspondent: Gary Fishman

1) Russian Assassin #1 pinned Italian Stallion (sub for the departed Nikita) Dud 2) Fantastics over Jim Holliday & Rip Morgan when Tommy Rogers pinned Holiday after the rocket launcher. * $\frac{1}{2}$ 3) Original Midnight Express beat Texas Broncos as Randy Rose pinned Kendall Windham. * 4) Ivan Koloff pinned Russian Ass #2 in a death match which went 5 minutes. He must have been brutal on him. ** 5) Barry Windham pinned Eddie Gilbert using the ropes for leverage in a good match. *** 6) Dusty Rhodes & Rick Steiner beat Kevin Sullivan & Steve Williams in what was supposed to be a six man tag with Bigelow & Rotunda included. Mike was at ringside but Bam Bam no showed. Dusty pinned Kevin. *** 7) Sting and Lex Luger beat The Road Warriors in an elimination tag match. Nothing compared to their match here last month. Hawk and Sting were counted out which left Animal and Lex. Ellering interfered which led to Animal being dq'd giving the win to the faces. ** Att: 4,000 Worst NWA card since Sept. 87. Eaton, Lane, Perez, and Zybysko also no shows.

Veterans Memorial Coliseum Phoenix, AZ December 12, 1988
Correspondent: Matt Martin

1) Ted DiBiase pinned Hercules 2) Ronnie Garvin over Boris Zuchov 3) Dino Bravo beat Jim Duggan 4) Randy Savage pinned Rick Rude 5) Rockin Robin over Sherri Martel 6) Brain Busters beat The Rockers

Dorton Arena Raleigh, N.C. December 15, 1988
Correspondent: Mike Gunter

This was a T.V. taping for the N.W.A. syndies which was on this weekend. 1) Misty Blue, Heidi Lee Morgan, and Moolba (?) beat Linda Dallas, Kat Leroux and ? Dud 2) Commandoes won a squash. Dud 3) Junkyard Dog squished Agent Steele. 4) Bobby Fulton squashed Cruel Connection #348. 5) Dennis Condrey beat Curtis Thompson. All these matches were duds. 6) Kevin Sullivan pinned Kendall Windham using trunks. Gilbert came out and almost got into it with Kevin. (C) 7) Rick Steiner pinned Steve Williams in a dark match that went 12 minutes. Steiner used a belly to belly which resulted in Doc's first pinfall in 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years. C + 8) Fantastics beat the Original Midnights in a 2 out of 3 fall match which was completely televised on this weeks World Wide show. 1st Fall- Condrey pinned Fulton. 2nd Fall- Rogers pinned Rose. 3rd Fall- Dangerously uses the phone on Rogers but Cornette comes in and whacks Condrey with the racket enabling Tommy to score the pin. Mike gave it a B and it was a great match. 9) Road Warriors & Barry Windham beat Dusty, Sting, and Luger in a dark match. Sting had Animal in the scorpion but Ellering smacked the Stinger with a chair allowing Animal to make the pinfall. (B) Att:450

Los Angeles Sports Arena Los Angeles, CA December 17, 1988
Correspondent: Andy Dragos

1) Boris Zhukov pinned Lanny Poffo (sub for injured Blazer). Both tried hard but crowd wasn't into it. (C-) 2) Greg Valentine and Tito Santana went to a 20 minute draw. The bell rang just as Tito went for the figure four. (B+) 3) Bad News Brown defeated Jim Powers with the ghetto blaster. After the match, Mr. Fuji and the Powers of Pain made their "let's show the fans we're heels" appearance. (C) 4) Demolition and P.O.P. went to a double dq when the match broke down and ref couldn't control it. (C-) 5) Ted DiBiase pinned Hercules when Herc had him up in a backbreaker and Virgil hit the strongman with the chain enabling Ted to make the pin. (C+) 6) Akeem over Koko Ware with the 747 in a match Andy said was a battle to determine the real black man. (D+) 7) Rockin Robin beat Sensational Sherri with a bulldog. (C) 8) Hulk Hogan pinned Big Boss Man after Hulk broke out of the cuffs and then proceeded to win with the leg bomb. (B) Att:14,000

Wheeling Civic Center

Wheeling, W.V.

December 27, 1988

Correspondent: John Lanigan

1) Blue Blazer beat Conquistador Estrada in 9:50 after he reversed a sunset flip into a bridge. Blazer didn't do much here. (C-) 2) Greg Valentine beat Ron Garvin in 14:50. Greg reversed a flying bodypress by Rugged Ronnie to score the clean pin. (C+) 3) Danny Davis pinned Lanny Poffo with a rump splash from the top rope. John fell asleep so no time. (D-) 4) Ultimate Warrior over Honkey Tonk Man in a no dq at 5:00. Jimmy Hart ran into the ring but Warrior threw Hart onto Honkey to set up the pin. (C-) 5) Terry Taylor beat Koko Ware with the cock of the walk in 7:22. Nothing much. (D+) 6) Brain Busters upended The Rockers in 14:37. End saw Sean Michaels have Arn up for a suplex but Tully tripped Sean, thus Anderson fell on top for the pin. (B-) 7) Dino Bravo pinned Hacksaw Duggan in 7:14 when Frenchy distracted Hack and Bravo came in with a knee to the back. (D) 8) Steve Lombardi upset Jim Powers with a small package in 7:12. (D-) 9) Hulk Hogan beat Big Boss Man via count out in 10:53. Same ending as their first match around the horn where Hulk cuffs Bubba and clotheslines him out of the ring where he is counted out. (C+) Att:5,960

Letters To The Editor

Heel Champions

I agree with your letter in the Dec. 1 issue of "Pro Wrestling Torch" about heel champions. I saw Ray Stevans in his heyday pack them into the San Francisco Cow Palace monthly when he grappled as the meanest, dirtiest, most hated human on earth! In fact, his eventual turn into a face was one of the reasons I slowed my own attendance at the live shows even though Stevans and Pat Patterson as tag partners were great fun. Heels are what this biz is all about for me!

Jeff Mullins

San Jose, CA

RL-The letter which Jeff is referring to was one I sent Wade Keller complaining about Vince's lack of heel world champions.

Talent Going Unnoticed

I don't know about you but I'm sick of seeing no talent bums like Dusty Rhodes, the Honkey Tonk Man, Dennis Condrey and Randy Rose get so much attention while guys who are very underrated and shilled get no media coverage. The wrestlers I am talking about are: Italian

Stallion, Kendall Windham, Sam Houston, Barry Horowitz, Paul Roma, Jim Powers, Jerry Allen and many others who are neglected. Only the Jan. 1988 issue of "Double Action Wrestling" magazine devoted any kind of coverage to Jerry Allen's late '87 upset win over Rick Rude! I think more coverage of these fine young men who all could be future superstars would greatly improve the state of our favorite sport.

Matt Martin
Glendale, AZ

RL- You have to remember that a couple of guys you listed could get bigger pushes somewhere else but choose to stay with Titan due to the money, namely Houston and Horowitz. Roma & Powers I believe have gotten a bigger push than they deserved as the Stallions. I'm curious as to Allen's upset over Rude. When and where? In Memphis when Allen wrestled as Jerry Oski and was the Southern Heavyweight Champion? He got a major push there but couldn't cut the mustard. I guess there wasn't much covered about that match as I never heard that.

Predictions '89

Ted Turner will fail in his attempt to make the NWA a real competitor to the WWF. The only way he can make this prediction not come true is to realize wrestling is entertainment, not sport. Watching the "Seasons Beatings" card on TBS is an example. The match involving Flair was way too long for television. Plus, while Dillon's shoe was clocking an opponent, we had a shot of the two managers grabbing at each other. This missing of the key point in the match would never have happened in Vince-land.

Savage will turn, and Liz will stay as his manager. Unless Randy's marriage is going out the door, Vince won't be able to split them up. Or will he?

Ric Flair will join Titan and clash with Hulk. Flair and Hogan are not getting any younger, and this feud could set Vince and the two wrestlers up for a long time to come.

Koko Ware will turn, and eat Frankie on national T.V.

Ron Lemieux and Dan Reilly will fulfill lifetime dreams and join forces as a tag team against Ultimate Warrior and George Steele. They will be known as the "Salesmen" and wrestle in three piece suits. They will be managed by, who else, "The Doctor of Style" Slick.

Ted Bruttomesso
Berlin, CT

RL-Hey Ted, what's the finish of our match? Will we pitch them until they submit?

Final Word

That wraps up issue #9. Thanks to all who contributed. This time too numerous to mention individually. Keep those results and letters coming. The next issue will be the 1/28 Springfield show. We'll have three issues in Feb. to make up for Jan. 2/4 from Philly, 2/13 from New Haven, and one in late Feb. from Springfield. Until then, keep those New Year's resolutions.

See ya,
Ron